

# **Housing Commission Meeting Minutes for March 23, 2022**

Location: Walter Stiles Conference Room, City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

## **I. Meeting called to order at 5:03pm**

## **II. Welcome and Roll Call**

### **• Members Present:**

1. Jean Mugabo
2. Jessica Margeson
3. Kate Marquis - alternate
4. Peter Capano
5. Joe Wichert - alternate
6. Zach Palmer

• Chris Wellington, Absent and Kate Marquis, Late

\* Commissioner Wichert voting in Commissioner Wellington's absence for this meeting.

## **III. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – 3/9/22**

**MOTION:** to approve the March 9, 2022 Housing Commission Meeting Minutes made by Commissioner Wichert and seconded by Commissioner Margeson. Motion passed unanimously.

## **IV. Old Business**

### **a. City Website/Facebook Update**

- Currently on the city website calendar and listed as a Commission under Commissions and Boards page.
- Commissioner Marquis working with Shannon in Mayor's office and InfoSys to get minutes and agenda onto city website under Mayor's office.
- Commissioner's Margeson and Mugabo discussed regular column for InkLink. Commissioner Mugabo will send to the group for review.

### **b. Housing Assessment**

- Chair Capano shared that there has been a high response rate from Manchester to the Regional Housing Needs Assessment survey.

## **V. New Business – 5:20**

### **a. Individual Goals and Committees**

- Commissioner Wichert asked what is our goal and how do we quantify it.
- Chair Capano would like to stay on submissions to the city – like the Hallsville School. Start attending Planning Board Meetings as a Commission.
- Discussion on Hallsville School Building. April 6, 2022 is a community discussion about what to do with the school.
- Commissioner Wichert asked if we as a Board might advocate for builders facing the Planning and/or Zoning Boards through a Memorandum of Support if they might agree to reach a certain threshold with affordable units or other goals. Discussion included what those goals may look like, future zoning revisions, whether that idea would be meaningful to the Boards and worth the effort to the builders.
- Commissioner Mugabo described conditions for new immigrants living long term in hotels because they cannot find housing. Landlords are hesitant to rent to them because they have no references or credit scores and may have some hesitation with language barrier – even when they have ample funds to pay rent. Commissioner Palmer mentioned nonprofit organizations that may be able to help with connecting to houses and apartments. Commissioners Margeson and Mugabo would like to focus on working with immigrants and working to bridge the housing gaps between immigrants and landlords.
- Commissioner Marquis suggested the Commission might look to become a central connector to all parties involved in creating housing in the city – a central resource.
- Discussion on the Memorandum of Support continued including ideas like approving waivers and variances if projects meet certain standards and developing some sway with Planning and Zoning that might fast track projects that meeting certain standards.
- Commissioner Palmer brought up how our Commission might better work with the Planning Board. These ideas are great, but need to be discussed with Planning to know if this is an avenue. Consensus agreed.
- Chair Capano will write emails on behalf of Commission to the Planning and Zoning Boards to discuss how some of these ideas might work together.
- Commissioner Margeson would like to have a Housing Standards/Code of Compliance Committee. Discussion took place on enforcement of codes, lead abatement, and inspector training.

- Commissioner Palmer would like to create a Developer Committee to open a door to developers working with the Commission and invite Jodie Nazaka, Manchester's Economic Development Director, to it.

**b. Hallsville School Building**

- See discussion above.
- The Future of Hallsville Elementary Community Discussion  
Wednesday, April 6, 2022 from 6 – 8pm at 275 Jewett Street

**VI. Other Business/Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion:** Commissioner Wichert motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Palmer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Meeting is adjourned at 6:40pm**

NEXT MEETING: April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 5pm in the Walter Stiles Conference Room on the second floor at City Hall.